Protection of Lower Riparian States of Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu

278. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:
SHRI C.RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that sharing of river waters had become a major contentious issue among the States in recent times;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Prime Minister had to intervene to sort out the difference between the upper and lower riparian States;

(c) whether Government are aware of the problems faced by Andhra Pradesh due to non-cooperation Karnataka which is in upper reaches of Tunghabhadra and Pannar in times of distress; and

(d) if so, whether Government have any plan or suggestion to protect the interest of lower riparian States like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) and (b) Most of the major rivers in India are inter-State in character having catchments/ watersheds in two or more States. Often water disputes arise amongest the basin States with regard to the use, distribution or control of the waters in respect of these inter-state rivers/river valleys or in the interpretation of the terms of any agreement relating to the use, distribution or control of such water or in the implementation of any such agreement Actions/steps are undertaken through negotiations at all level so that inter-State disputes are resolved for optimum development of water resources.

Under Article 262 of the Constitution, Parliament has enacted Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956 for adjudication of disputes relating to water of Inter-State rivers and river valleys. According to Section 4 (1) of Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956, "when any request under Section (3) is received from any State Government in respect of any water dispute and the Central Government is of the opinion that the water dispute cannot be settled by negotiations, the Central Government shall, within a period not exceeding one year from the date of receipt of such request, by notification in the Official Gazette, constitute a Water Dispute Tribunal for the adjudication of the water dispute."

(c) and (d) State of Andhra Pradesh from time to time has brought to the notice of Central Government the actions of State of Karnataka in Tungbhadra and Pennar basins which according to the State of Andhra Pradesh adversely affected its interests. Government of India has made efforts to address the problems faced by the States including Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu through negotiations in the inter-State meetings.

WHO-UNICEF sponsored study on Water Supply and Sanitation

279. SHRI EKANATHK. THAKUR: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether according to the WHO-UNICEF sponsored study on the country's water supply and sanitation 200 districts in the country have high fluoride concentration in groundwater, spread over 17 States and affecting a population of some 25 million;

(b) whether it is a fact that West Bengal is reported to be at risk owing to the presence of arsenic in groundwater;

(c) whether the report has recommended enactment of groundwater legislation in all the States; and

(d) if so, Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The report of the WHO-UNICEF sponsored study on country's water supply and sanitation recommended that ground water legislation aiming at equity and sustainability in access to ground water and its development needs to be enacted in all States.

(d) The report has been circulated by the Planning Commission to all the State Governments for taking necessary action. The Ministry of Water Resources has already circulated a Model Bill to regulate and control the development of ground water to all State Governments/Union Territories as early as in 1970 and re-circulated it in 1992 and again in 1996 for adoption, So far the State Governments of Andhra pradesh, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Union Territory of Lakshadweep have enacted legislation in this regard.